



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

LAURA H. THIELEN, CHAIRPERSON
Phone: (808) 587-0320
Fax: (808) 587-0390

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DLNR, DOH INVESTIGATE REPORT OF DEAD FISH ON NI'ITHAU

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Aquatic Resources and Department of Health Clean Water Branch are investigating a report of a large number of dead fish along the shorelines of Ni'ihau, the privately owned island off the west coast of Kaua'i.

DLNR's Aquatic Resources Division on Kaua' i received the report on Monday, February 2 from the island's owner.

DLNR aquatic biologist Don Heacock, along with Department of Health Clean Water Branch specialist Gary Ueunten traveled to Ni'ihau yesterday to conduct an investigation into this report.

Preliminary investigations revealed at one location on the southern end of the island, about a hundred dead fish were found on the beach. Other coastal areas were spot checked and revealed lower densities of dead fish. Based on their condition, the observed dead fish may have died some time previously.

Species found included triggerfishes (humuhumu), rudderfish (nenue), and a snapper (taape), along with several other species in smaller quantities. Samples were taken and will be examined to try and determine the possible cause of death. Follow up surveys are being planned. Updates on investigation findings will be issued at a later date.

The public is advised not to capture and consume any fish that seems impaired or sluggish in its movements and has any strange or unusual odor. These and other unusual conditions may be caused by some type of unknown contaminant, parasite, disease, or marine toxin. Consumers are advised to ask where fish was caught and avoid consuming fish caught in coastal waters of Ni'ihau until more information is available.

Anyone with information on the fish kill is asked to contact: Don Heacock, DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (Kaua ' i): (808) 274-3344; or Watson Okubo, DOH Clean Water Branch: (808) 586-4309.

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For more information news media may contact:

Janice Okubo

DOH Public Information Office

Phone: (808) 586-4442

Deborah Ward

DLNR Public information specialist

Phone: (808) 587-0320